

Silver Thaw Damage Greatest on Record

The Camas-Washougal area began to dig itself out and assess damages this week after the most destructive tilt with winter snow and ice on record. Although the 1916 blizzard may have offered more in the way of snow and ice, increased dependence on electricity added to the damage and suffering.

Power and telephone service was disrupted throughout the county, with some areas still without electricity or telephones this week.

A disastrous silver thaw last Thursday and Friday was responsible for most of the damage.

Snow, high winds and zero temperatures earlier in the week tied up transportation and caused some damage—slight in comparison with the destruction caused by the silver thaw.

Heavy icing destroyed thousands of trees. Orchards were stripped and uprooted. Power failures brought trouble to poultry growers who could not warm their brooders, while dairymen were crippled when milkers and refrigeration equipment failed.

No estimate has been made to date on the total damage, but the \$300,000 rough estimate announced by the Clark County PUD indicates the overall loss will be the greatest in local history.

Transportation was at a virtual standstill throughout the week, except for the main highways which opened and closed intermittently.

Train and bus service ran behind schedule through most of the bad weather but no particular congestion was seen locally.

Some county roads remained blocked early this week, while in most areas local residents managed to dig and cut their way out through snowdrifts and fallen trees and utility poles.

Isolated families, especially in to take care of themselves in most cases as rescue crews found them short of food but otherwise secure.

The threat of minor floods loomed this week as rapidly melting snow combined with rain to bring the level of many rivers near the danger point. Other parts of the state are already fighting flood waters.

Here in Camas, a totally unprepared populace found itself unable to cook food or heat homes as the power failure became general last Thursday and Friday.

Many homes were without heat of any kind for four and five days. Others were forced to rely on fireplaces. Except for groceries and meat markets, business stopped abruptly in downtown Camas.

City Crews Clear Streets

Snow Piles Must Melt Naturally, Angelo Says

All Camas streets were cleared Monday, with the exception of a few dead end streets and alleys, City Engineer Louis Angelo said.

Snow pushed to the center of the streets will remain there until it melts, he said. Cost of removing the tons of snow would be too great for the city to bear.

He explained that as long as traffic is able to move through the streets, there is no danger in letting the snow melt naturally.

Catch basins are being watched carefully to make sure they are clear enough to carry off the water.

Some citizens complained about city graders blocking driveways with snow. This could not be avoided, it was explained, since the graders had too much territory to cover to allow stopping for each driveway.

Angelo and his crew worked night and day throughout the wintry siege to keep streets passable. Under pressure late last week some extra men had to be put on the crews to relieve the exhausted regulars.

One employee, Ray Butler, put in 17 hours straight on a city grader before being relieved for clear the streets, especially in the downtown areas. A tow truck was obtained to move some of them, but the practice proved too expensive.

Motorists generally ignored the "No Parking" signs along downtown streets, posted so city crews would be able to work.

Despite the various obstacles, city streets were clear and the situation under control early Sunday morning.